A NEW THEORY

of the

Resolution of Discords

according to the

Modern System,

BY

ANT. REICHA.

Translated by

I. A. HAMILTON,

Professor of Music

NEW THEORY of the RESOLUTION of DISCORDS
## according to the MODERN SYSTEM.

A dissonant chord has always one natural resolution; but, besides this resolution, it will admit of several others, which form so many exceptions. Upon what principle are these exceptions admissible? ———— This is a point respecting which all our Treatises are silent. As, however, a thorough understanding of this principle is extremely im_portant, we shall proceed to establish and develope it.

In any discord, all the notes are not dissonant; one or two are so, the rest are consonant. In the first place, therefore, it is necessary that we should know exactly which are the dissonant notes in each chord, because to those in particular all our remarks are intended to apply. We shall now proceed to indicate the dissonant notes in each discord.

GENERAL RULE.

A note is dissonant in a chord, when it forms a dissonance with the fundamental bass, or root of that chord.

1st Discord, or the imperfect common chord: (only one note dissonant). The dissonant note of this chord is F, because the F is a dissonance with respect to B, the fundamental bass of the chord.
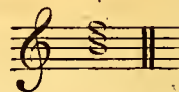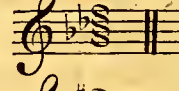
2d Discord, or first species of the chord of the seventh; or, as it is more usu_ally termed, the dominant seventh: (one dissonant note). The root is G, the dissonance F.
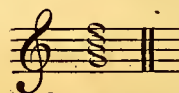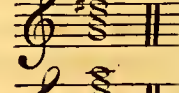
3d Discord, or second species of the chord of the seventh: (one dissonant note). The root is G, the dissonance F.

4th Discord, or third species of the chord of the seventh: (two dissonant notes). The root is G, the dissonant notes are Db and F.

5th Discord, or fourth species of the chord of the seventh, or major se_venth: (only one dissonant note). The root is G, and the dissonance F♯. (*)

6th Discord, or chord of the major ninth: (two dissonant notes). The root is G, the dissonant notes are F and A.
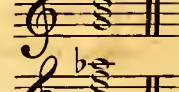
7th Discord, or chord of the minor ninth: (two dissonant notes). The root is G, the dissonant notes are F and Ab.

8th Discord, or chord of the superfluous fifth: (only one dissonant note). The root is G, and the dissonant note D♯. (**)

9th Discord, or chord of the superfluous fifth and minor seventh: (two dissonant notes). The root is G, the dissonant notes are D♯ and F♮. (**)
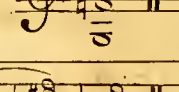
(*) HAYDN has used this chord with its fifth accidentally sharpened. See the third bar of the following example.
The note affected with this chromatic alteration necessarily becomes a new dissonance, which must be resolved by ascending a Semitone.
(**) In the two chords of the superfluous fifth, (Nos 8 and 9) the note altered chromatically (the superfluous fifth) must always be resolved in ascending. In the imperfect common chord No 1, the dissonant note may either ascend or descend according to circumstances.
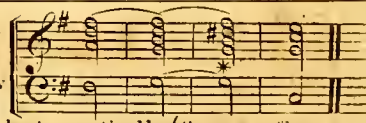
10th Discord, or chord of the superfluous sixth: (three dissonant notes with respect to the fundamental bass, which is a supposed note). The root of this chord is **G**, as we have demonstrated in our PRACTICAL COURSE of HAR-MONY. Consequently, the dissonant notes are D♭, F, and A♭. Each of these three notes stands in the relation of a dissonance with B♮, the only consonance in the chord.

11th Discord, or chord of the superfluous sixth and fourth: (two dissonant notes). The root is **G**, the dissonant notes, D♭ and F.

In correct harmony, we can only employ a dissonant note under the following conditions.

1st When it is resolved immediately, no matter in what chord that resolution is made. In this case the dissonance almost always descends either a tone or a semitone.

2ly When, by the choice of the following chord, the dissonant note becomes a concord without changing its place.

3ly When, without changing its place, it still remains a dissonance in the following chord, and is resolved farther on.

4ly When it skips from one part to another, in which latter part it is ultimately resolved.

5ly When it is employed melodially, or in arpeggio, in which circumstances it may often remain unresolved.

We shall proceed to illustrate these five cases.

CASE 1.

A discord is resolved regularly, that is, according to its natural law, when its fundamental bass descends a fifth to the fundamental bass of the following chord, which fifth is almost always perfect. For Example

When this condition is not observed, we introduce an exception to the ordinary and natural succession of chords: . . . . for example But the dissonant note F in the first chord descends upon E in the second, resolving in the same manner in both examples, and thus preserving its regular resolution. Consequently, we may at any time resolve a discord by exception, provided its dissonant note be regularly resolved. This important remark enables us to lay down the following rule, which is of great practical influence.
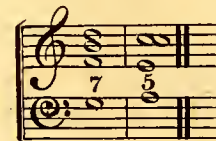
GENERAL RULE.

Any discord may be resolved by exception in various ways, provided that its dissonant note is resolved regularly.

Upon this principle, the dominant seventh admits of the following resolutions, because in all of them the dissonant note F descends to E, as its resolution.

4

This rule is equally applicable when the dissonant note of the chord appears in the bass: for Ex:

There are but few exceptions to this rule. The most useful are the following, in which the dissonant note F ascends a semitone to its resolution .

To these three exceptions, we may add the following, where C and E,(two dissonant notes in the first chord), instead of de_ scending, ascend a semitone to their resolution .

In a succession of diminished sevenths, we may also resolve the dissonant intervals in ascen ding.

In the four preceding examples (A,B,C,D,) the dissonance ascends only a semitone. to its resolution by exception; but, occasionally, we may also cause the dissonance to ascend a whole tone, as in the following example.

This licence may be tolerated, when the bass takes the note upon, which the dissonant note would naturally resolve, if there were no ex_ ception. This bass note produces the effect of an E, doubled in the octave.

We must not employ this licence too frequently, nor attempt it in any other instances.

CASE 2.

A dissonant note may become consonant, without changing its place, even though the chord be changed.

Here C, the dissonant note in the first chord, becomes a concord in the 2d?

Another example, in which the dissonant note F be_ comes consonant in the following chord.

A third example, in which the two dissonant notes C and Eb, become con_ sonant in the following chord .

A dissonant note may become a disso-
nance in the following chord, without its
being changed, or subjected to any chro-
matic alteration; this supposes at least two
discords in succession.   Example.

The dissonant note F, still remains a dissonance, though the chord is changed. (See Ex: A, B.)

In example C, the F remains dissonant in three successive chords. It is regularly re-
solved upon the E♮ in the fourth chord, which, in its turn, is resolved in the fifth chord.

Upon this principle, MOZART has employed the
following succession in the opening of the Overture
to DON GIOVANNI.

The D in the second and third chord, is dissonant, and it again becomes consonant in
the fourth; the C in the fourth and fifth chord is also a dissonance, and is resolved in the sixth.✳

It is obvious that a dissonant note in one chord, which continues a dissonance in another,
is a DISSONANCE COMMON TO TWO CHORDS. When the common dissonance does not re-
quire preparation, (✱✱) it admits: 1st
of being repeated an octave higher
or lower in the same part; 2ly of
being tranferred from one part to
another, on striking the second chord.

In Nº 1, the dissonance F descends or ascends an octave; in Nº 2, the dissonance is
transferred, on changing the chord, from an upper to an intermediate part.

CASE 4.

From what we have just said, it is evident that a dis-
sonant note which does not require preparation, may,
in like manner, be transferred from one part to ano-
ther, without changing the chord.   Example.

CASE 5.

In the course of the melody, we may often strike a dissonant note without resolving it;
this is admissible under the following conditions. 1st It must be followed by another note form-
ing an integral part of the chord. 2ly It must not be the note immediately preceding the reso-
lution; for in this latter case, the resolution must always be regular. The following examples will
serve to illustrate these rules; the dissonant notes are indicated by + .

Melody in the bass.

We do not deny that the abuse of the theory just developed, would not produce harsh&disagre-
able, not to say intolerable effects; here, we do not speak of the abuse of these licences, but of impor-
tant harmonic properties, of which the interest of the art imposes upon us the duty of giving an explanation.

✳ The C in the fourth chord ought to be prepared. Mozart has chosen to employ it here without pre-
paration, in order not to interrupt his chromatic progression.

(✱✱) Preparation is essential only in sevenths of the second, third, and fourth species. See Nºs 3, 4,
5, in the enumeration of chords, page 1.